

# Office of the State Public Defender

## Administrative Policies

Subject: <b>Media Policy</b>	Policy No.: <b>230</b>
Title	Pages: <b>2</b>
Section:	Last Review Date:
Effective Date: <b>04/23/09</b>	Revision Date:

### 1.0 POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Office of the State Public Defender's (OPD or the agency) response to media inquiries.

The agency will:

- Respond to media inquiries in a timely, appropriate, and professional manner;
- Give all members of the media equal access to public information;
- Do its best to ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date;
- Uphold the constitutional right of all Montanans to know what their government is doing on their behalf; and
- Take into account the constitutional right of individuals to privacy, and state and federal laws that mandate confidentiality in specific situations.

Any employee who has questions about whether specific information is public or private should contact the Administrative Director at 496-6080.

### 2.0 PROCEDURES/REQUIREMENTS

#### 2.1 Media Inquiries

The Chief Public Defender, Administrative Director and Regional Deputy Public Defenders may give interviews to or respond to media requests for information. They may delegate this responsibility to other employees on specific projects, issues or topics as appropriate.

Employees should refer media inquiries to their supervisor, Regional Deputy Public Defender, Administrative Director or the Chief Public Defender. If the employee is unable to reach any of these individuals, the employee should provide the requested information to the media representative or refer them to the best source of the information. All questions concerning OPD policy should be forwarded to the Central Office prior to responding.

Anyone who responds to a media inquiry should notify their supervisor, Regional Deputy Public Defender, Administrative Director **and** the Chief Public Defender by e-mail. The e-mail should include:

- The reporter's name, affiliation, and phone number;
- The date/time of the contact;
- The topic of the reporter's call; and
- A brief synopsis of the employee's response.

#### 2.2 News Releases and Press Conferences

All news releases and press conferences must be approved by the Administrative Director or the Chief Public Defender prior to release or scheduling.

### **2.3 Publications**

State agencies are required by law to send a minimum of one electronic copy and up to 17 paper copies of all publications to the State Library Publications Center Coordinator.

All agency publications must include:

- Cost disclosure information as required in Section 18-7-306, MCA (provided by the Department of Administration Print and Mail Services office);
- An accessibility statement: "Alternative accessible formats of this publication will be provided by request. For further information call xxx-xxxx or TTY 711."

### **3.0 CLOSING**

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Central Office at the following address:

Office of the State Public Defender, Administrative Services Division  
44 West Park  
Butte, MT 59701  
Phone: 406-496-6080

### **4.0 CROSS-REFERENCE GUIDE**

Montana Constitution Article II, Sections 9 (right to know) & 10 (privacy)  
2-6-101, MCA et seq. Public Records